

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Kentucky Commission on Community Volunteerism and Service
Request for Proposals
FY 18 AmeriCorps State Competitive Grant

Information current as of October 23, 2017

1. What is the difference between the Competitive grant opportunity and the Formula grant opportunity?

The fall “Competitive” process is the current process for this Request for Proposals. It is the process by which applicants in the Commonwealth of Kentucky apply for AmeriCorps funding through the Kentucky Commission on Community Volunteerism and Service (KCCVS). KCCVS reviews these applications and identifies which projects should move forward to the national competition. At that point, the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) evaluates the applications and determines which will be funded. This competition is a good fit for large programs (20+ MSYs), programs that meet the national priorities, programs that propose to operate in one single focus area, and/or programs with strong evidence-based or evidence-informed interventions.

In contrast, the spring “Formula” process is the local state competition. The applications in the Formula competition only compete against applicants in our state (they are not forwarded on to compete against other programs across the nation) and funding decisions are made by KCCVS. The Formula process, however, has a much smaller allocation of money to draw from. The Formula competition is a good fit for smaller programs (15-25 MSYs), programs that meet local priorities, programs that propose to operate in single or multiple focus areas, and/or programs that are building their evidence-base.

The next Formula opportunity is projected to be held in the spring of 2018 for fall 2018-19 project periods.

2. My organization only wants one or two AmeriCorps members. Should I apply for this Request for Grant Applications?

No. This grant solicitation is only for programs that propose to engage a team of 20 or more members in their program. A Member Service Year (MSY) is similar to the concept of a Full-Time Employee (FTE). For example, two half-time members are equal to one full-time MSY.

If your organization is interested in hosting less than 20 members, for example a single independent placement AmeriCorps member or a smaller AmeriCorps team, you may wish to contact an AmeriCorps program in your area or a statewide intermediary to determine if a partnership may be feasible.

3. Can we submit letters of support to help strengthen our application?

Generally, No. KCCVS will *only* accept letters of support for new/recompete applications in the Governor/Mayor Initiative and Rural Intermediary categories as directed in the NOFO and Mandatory Supplemental Guidance. Applicable letters should be sent to AmeriCorps@ky.gov, DO NOT send letters to the CNCS inbox referenced. Letters from general applicants will not be considered and will not be returned.

4. Can you speak further to the role of a rural intermediary?

This is a program design question that must be addressed at the program level. Programs must self-determine if their program design meets the definition of a rural intermediary. The definition can be found in the Mandatory Supplemental Guidance.

5. For my project award period, should I consider anything beyond the start date and end date for my members?

Yes. The project award period is one full year, generally the 1st of the month through the last day of the 12th month. Within that year, the start and end dates for members may vary. It may be appropriate to have a buffer before and after members' terms of service.

- Project Period Example: August 1, 2018 – July 30, 2019
- Member Service Year Example: August 15, 2018 – June 30, 2019

6. What is the earliest or latest date a project award period can start?

The earliest project award period allowed is August 1, 2018 – July 30, 2019.

7. What is the difference between CNCS Focus Areas and CNCS Funding Priorities?

The CNCS [Strategic Plan](#) outlines the strategy for addressing the six focus areas identified in the Serve America Act: disaster services, economic opportunity, education, environmental stewardship, healthy futures, and veterans and military families. These focus areas are also outlined in the NOFO, beginning on page 1.

CNCS funding priorities are determined annually based on special initiatives. These priority areas are also outlined in the NOFO, beginning on page 2.

8. Where can I find additional information and resources on theory of change, logic models, performance measurement, and evaluation?

Applicants can find additional resources on the CNCS grant opportunity [website](#), look under Performance Measure Instructions and Technical Assistance Information.

9. Our organization tracks more outputs and outcomes than are listed in our logic model and performance measures, how should we address this?

This is a program design question that must be addressed at the program level. However, it is noteworthy that the logic model represents the organization's total theory of change. Not all

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items listed in the logic model require an associated performance measure. Programs are only required to track one output and one aligned outcome within the total logic model.

10. How do I know if I apply to the cost-reimbursement prime application or the fixed-amount prime application?

All NEW applicants must apply for a cost-reimbursement application. (Unless your program is a NEW Education Award Only Program (EAP) – EAP programs apply for the fixed-amount application.)

Recompeting applicants previously awarded under the fixed-amount model or recompeting applicants who have discussed switching to the fixed-amount model with KCCVs may apply for the fixed-amount application.

11. Should we cite research using a bibliography page?

A bibliography page is not necessary and may use up valuable page limits. KCCVS suggests citing all research directly within the text of the narrative. Cite the source directly, do not use URLs or web links.

12. Even though we're still in the very early stages of our planning grant, can we apply for competitive funding? Or would we need to wait until our current grant is complete?

It's technically allowed, but requires special approval if you are proposing the same program design as the planning grant (see the MSG for the definition of "same project"), and could affect your current grant. Formula planning grants are intended to give you time to write a full formula grant. Plus, if the commission doesn't decide the application is strong enough to be sent to the CNCS competition, or it is sent and not funded, you'd still have to go through the formula funding process. However, it certainly wouldn't hurt to familiarize yourself with the NOFO and related documents so you are better prepared when the time comes to write a full application.

13. Do we need to have an independent audit of our AmeriCorps program?

KCCVS needs a copy of reports and findings from single audits performed under OMB Circular A-133 and findings of any other available audits (if expended \$750,000 or more in total federal funds in your **organization's** last fiscal year) or a copy of your most recent financial statement review via email. Please submit by email to AmeriCorps@ky.gov by October 31, 2017.

14. What additional documents do I need to submit as a new potential applicant?

New applicants must also complete the Organization Readiness Assessment, available on the Kentucky AmeriCorps Grant Information [webpage](#) and email it to AmeriCorps@ky.gov by the application deadline.

15. Is there more information on the changes to the evidence section?

The Evidence Checklist is coming soon (CNCS will offer a webinar – see their [NOFO webpage](#) for details). KCCVS will post additional resources on our website as they become available.

16. What are A-DRT's?

A-DRT's stands for AmeriCorps Disaster Response Teams. See the [CNCS website](#) for more information.

17. Are there changes to the requirements for continuation applications?

Yes, CNCS has streamlined the narrative requirements. Narrative content (enrollment/exit questions) will not be required any more, as this information is covered during Grantee Progress Report (GPR) reviews and normal portfolio management discussions. Continuation applicants are no longer able to request funding expansions. (While this may sound significant, it's not a significant change in *practice*, as expansion request were rarely awarded). See the 2018 AmeriCorps Application Instructions (page 13) for more information. information.

18. The application instructions states “applicants may not request funding and/or slot increases during the continuation process.” How can we include the increase in the minimum living allowance?

You may not request an increase in the **total** CNCS share of the budget or the cost per MSY. To incorporate the increased living allowance, you will need to reduce other line items on the CNCS share and/or include the increase on the grantee share.

19. This space could be for your question! Submit one today to AmeriCorps@ky.gov.